

Elkweed

Swertia radiata



Elkweed is also known as Green Gentian or Monument Plant and is a member of the Gentian family. It is found in upland meadows. Unlike most of the plant species at Cedar Breaks that flower many times, year after year, Elkweed grows for a number of years as a low rosette of leaves without flowering. When it has accumulated enough energy and is stimulated by the right environmental factors, it puts everything into making flowers and seeds and then dies. In some years many plants will flower and the meadows are full while in other years, very few plants will flower. One reason this irregular mass flowering evolved may be to foil predators who will be overwhelmed by the vast number of seeds produced in some years and unable to eat them all.